

Coal Miners

From my vantage in the company's office
I never cease to admire our coal miners'
Philosophical composure before the proletariat
Of faith. In fact I was one of the first
On our floor to fight for the right to wear denim.
I know it fouls no one, except no claim,
And makes me look ridiculous in the eyes
Of Upper Management, but how else, if I can't speak
To them directly, can I express my similar willingness
To let their Man be tender of the pack?
These small homages to the icons of his tragic vigour
Only allow us less gallantly to hypothesize his life
Underground how he strikes the spangled earth,
Advancing slowly down its major arteries impelled
By no anger his own unholy din every moment renews.
His skin, like the limestone of a sea-worn cliff,
Has become one magnificent callus. His lungs
Are more dense with death than any cowboy's.
Whatever his cigarette. Because he has inhabited
Even this depth of darkness with the light
(If a common purpose his soul is satisfied
To a degree we can but dimly imagine. Let us at least
Do that. Let us honor the dourly churches
And ephemeral pornography that allow him to breed
Responsive sons who'll carry on the ruinous fight
With the first terrible lunge of a man's whole strength.
Let us wear, if only in our bedrooms or on certain
Holidays, a luster on our heads in honour
Of his conquest of despair. Dare we suppose that ours
Is larger? But as for approaching him
In friendship, as far as asking him to recognize
That by signing his paycheque in sanctioned simulation
Of the boss's signature we can be useful too—
No, that won't do. If they could hear us mauling
In the fletto caverns of our mirrored hars,
They'd only damn our condescending eyes.
Our kindnesses to them must be invisible or so discreet
As to seem as building the movies that let them dream
Of houseboats, sploos in helicopters, just desserts,
Of Shmoo as he detonates the jet-black pillars
Of one subterranean temple after another.
Then cars away their shattered Banks
To be buried in a million benevolent miles.
This much we'll do, and more: for ravaged skins
We'll sell a soap and call it ever-springing Hope.
On Saturdays, between advertisements for beer,
We'll share their ritual brutalities and cheer them on.
But we must not ask to be imagined in return.
Our business suits and busy minds, dashing fears
And air-conditioned air, cannot engender
Reciprocal myths. Perhaps it is Virgilian of me,
But I'd prefer my brothers underground
To believe in their inalienable rightness.
I'd rather they didn't know too much
Of the contents of my desk, the saucer
Of my pride, the force of my imagination
As it gnaws at the dark walls that surround me.

Tom Disch

Insular images

By Margaret Gardiner

GEORGE MACKAY BROWN
Portrait of Orkney
128pp. Hogarth Press. £8.50.
0 7012 0513 X

George Mackay Brown describes the "Orkney mind" as "an intermeshing of the practical and the imaginative". And this could well be a description of his own writing in his *Portrait of Orkney*. Every now and then he abandons the measured language of his prose-poems to break into a little dance, a snatch of poetry, the past, legend and myth, bubbling up to the surface of the present.

The book is divided into sections with orderly headings—People, Land, Sea, Religion, Culture and so on. But since this is neither a guide book with illustrations nor a picture book with commentary, a pleasant unreality confuses these categories. Contemporary descriptions and facts are intertwined with history, history with legend and legend with speculation.

and speculation. This weave—images of weaving, spinning, web and tapestry constantly recur—is surely apt for a portrait of islands whose people, living in a modern world, are nevertheless unusually aware of their past. The evidences are all about them and are part of their everyday lives—standing stones, brochs, cairns and the chapel-like clusters of farm buildings. And weaving is a natural image for an Orkneyman. Indeed, until quite recently hand weaving would often occupy farmers during the dark winters and today, in summer, fishermen can be seen sitting outside their houses, skillfully knotting their nets.

Although George Mackay Brown writes admirably of Orkney farmers with their "intricate of understatement" he himself—at least on paper—buzzes with enthusiasm. He delights in lists: they cluster thickly down upon the pages—lists of place names, of family names, of sea stories, of the subjects about which Orkneyans have written, of Orkney artists, of the people attending the Drunken Show.

It is in the section called "Lore" that George Mackay Brown's writing excels: he communicates his love of these folk tales with ease. In the charming final section, "A Nature Anthology", he also

shows his relish of earlier writings about Orkney—extracts from the sixteenth, seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, ranging from reports of monsters and other wonders to careful descriptions of the flora and fauna of the islands.

There are many photographs by Werner Forman. The black and white plates are the more successful and give a truer feeling of the islands, but some of the colour ones are beautiful; particularly the interior view of Magnus Cathedral, the Diver's Stone, Hoy, and the "Last of the peat fires, Kibrister". A kind of mysterious dusk pervades these plates—not at all realistic but lovely. Elsewhere the colour is sometimes too sweet and sometimes too harsh.

The layout is often unfortunate. The full-page plates are best left to the edge of the page, which is fine for what George Mackay Brown calls "the long thin interior of the islands". But when there are two full-page plates on opposite pages, the lack of frame or margin confuses the layout. In both images, and the Ring of Brodgar, which is spread over two pages, the opposite page is covered by the line of stitching down the spine of the book.



This commemorative medalion of the Thames Tunnel, the first tunnel to be built beneath the soft bed of a river, shows the twin entrances at the Rotherhithe end and gives us important dates in the history of its construction (including its collapse in 1825) which was finally completed in 1843. The illustration is taken from Iron Bridge to Crystal Palace: Impact and Images of the Industrial Revolution by Asa Briggs (208pp. Thames and Hudson in collaboration with the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, £15.50, 0 7155 4360 2). In this well-illustrated book Lord Briggs traces the growth and spread of industrial technology in Britain and other parts of the world.

Down to the Humber

By D. M. Palliser

EDWARD GILLET and KENNETH A. MACMAHON
A History of Hull
428pp. Oxford University Press. £12.
0 19 713436 X

A. G. Dickens, in a perceptive and too little-known account of Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire, was at pains to defend the interest and attractions of England's "third port". "Allow me a gesture of contempt", he wrote, "towards those ex-quisite literary topographers who, after rhymoddlings over York and Beverley, either turn aside from Hull with open disgust or record it but an agonised and grinning page". He was right, for Hull has a long and interesting past, though commercial growth, Hitler's bombs, and post-war redevelopment have conspired to destroy much of the physical evidence for it. And the neglect of which Dickens complained has since been atoned for by two major collaborative histories: an outline volume of the Victoria County History under the able editorship of K. J. Allison in 1969, and now the volume under review.

"Hull" is a convenient shorthand expression for more than one urban settlement in the angle where the small River Hull flows into the Humber. Its advantages for waterborne trade apparently made it a useful meeting-point for cargoes even before any town existed, as is suggested by a reference of 1193 to Yorkshire wool being collected for export in the "port of Hull". For the first town was apparently a planned settlement called Wyke upon Hull, sponsored by a local monastery about 1200 with an eye to commercial development. This, too, was taken over and enlarged and renamed Kingston upon Hull by Edward I, with a view to defence as well as commerce. Old Hull, therefore, with its regular street-plan and town walls, was as good an example of medieval town planning as Salisbury or Stratford, though it is not so easy to recognize today.

This late arrival among the great English medieval towns never looked back, and its ancient church of Holy Trinity—the largest medieval parish church in England—still testifies to its wealth. It is not necessary to its play. Its Trinity House, a maritime club, played an important part in the control of navigation and shipping, and its members were among the first Englishmen to participate in the fishing grounds of Iceland and the whaling off Greenland. It was chosen by Henry VIII as the location for a major complex of royal fortresses,

which would have rivalled the amazing defences at Berwick had they not been demolished by Victorian "improvements". Later it rose to the first rank of English ports through the importance of its fishing, shipping and shipbuilding, and it has retained that position despite recent economic difficulties.

A History of Hull has been written mainly by Edward Gillett, author of an earlier history of Grimsby, though drawing on some research and completed chapters by K. A. MacMahon, an East Yorkshire historian of distinction who died tragically young in 1972. The aim is "to give a compact account of the history of the town both for the specialist in urban history and for the general reader", based directly on original research rather than on the earlier, massive Victoria County History. This account takes the story from possible origins in the eleventh century to the opening of Hull and the opening of the Humber Bridge. It is a story told with a wealth of detail, especially for the last three centuries; but both urban historians and local residents will find here much fascinating information on trade, politics and social history.

Unfortunately, like many books trying to bridge two readerships, it is not quite able to satisfy either. The urban specialist unfamiliar with Hull will find the map inadequate for the first half of the story; there is no plan of the medieval town, and Hull's important early plan is quoted three times in evidence but not reproduced. There is rich documentation on Hull itself, but it is too rarely fitted into a broader framework. The reader is left unaware that Wyke and Kingston were important examples of the large class of medieval new towns studied by M. W. Barfield, whose standard work is not cited. The date of the town walls is never given, and it is mentioned only casually that they were built largely of brick. Hull was, in fact, one of the earliest centres of brick building in post-Roman England, but the reader would scarcely guess it from this account.

Altogether the book is much stronger on economic and political history than on physical growth and topography. A description of an excavated section of medieval wall from raises hopes that are not fulfilled for the "important programme" of urban archaeology over the past decade is mentioned in the text. Leland's careful description is misinterpreted and there is no mapping of the rapid urban growth since 1700. Evidence is presented in a very scattered and unsystematic way. The footnotes in Chapter 13 are unusable because they are out of phase with the text. Yet there is rich and rewarding information for the persevering reader, much of it previously unpublished, and at today's prices it is a bargain.

Darkest Yorkshire

By Asa Briggs

DEREK FRASER (Editor)
A History of Modern Leeds
50pp. Manchester University Press. £17.50.
0 7190 0747 X

A young visitor to Leeds, Barclay Fox, described the city in 1837 as "amongst all others the vilest of the vile", going on for good measure to profess pity for its "poor denizens". Derek Fraser, who edits this latest addition to the growing number of histories of English cities, starts his preface with this quotation. He ends it with a note of his own academic location, the University of Bradford. Before Leedsians (or Leeds Lovers) attribute Dr Fraser's choice of starting point to the old rivalry between Bradford and Leeds, it should be noted that not only was he a student in Leeds but that he still lives there. His volume has been supported, moreover, by Leeds City Council, which will doubtless warm more to Fraser's second remark that Leeds is now "a clean, attractive and relatively prosperous modern city".

If the second remark requires some qualification, limited at least, in the last three chapters of the book on the twentieth-century Leeds, it is difficult, too, to understand why, even at the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign, Leeds should have been described as "the vilest of the vile". There were many competitors. Some visitors to Yorkshire's great houses, of course, saw Leeds as a place in complete contrast, "oppressively industrial", as Dr Wilson, the author of the interesting chapter on Georgian Leeds put it. Yet there were closer links in certain respects—and they were to continue—between the Yorkshire squarearchy and aristocracy and Leeds than there were with Bradford or some other places. In fact, the sharpest criticism of Leeds tended to be made by writers. One of the first, Hartley Coleridge, stressed the assault on nature—the smoke-laden sky and the foul stream hot with sleepless frags: the River Aire: Leeds taken as a whole was

the town where tolling, buying, selling, getting and spending, poisoning hope and fear
Made but one season of the live-long year.

The black reputation was further darkened later in the century. George Eliot, not quoted by Fraser or his team of fellow-historians, said that the industrial suburbs of Leeds made her despair: not only of present civilization but of its prospect, and Dickens once called it a "beastly place, 'one of the nastiest' he knew".

Yet it was not solely through poverty that I should like to call my own chapter on Leeds in *Victorian Cities* "Leeds, A Study in Civic Pride". Like anyone who has got to know Leeds well through living there, I have not only appreciated but shared its strong sense of identity. Indeed, local pride has always been compatible with, even at times buttressed by, external criticism. Just as in the late twentieth-century pride in Don Revie's Leeds United was perhaps strongest when his team was being criticized. There have always been visible symbols of pride too—the eighteenth-century Cloth Hall; the nineteenth-century Town Hall; and (with necessary qualifications) the twentieth-century Civic Hall, Headrow, and Quarry Hill Flats.

It is left largely to Fraser as editor of the volume to deal with "Images" of Leeds, and well though he tries to present them they deserve rather more extended treatment. Certainly, some of the self-images were as disturbing as the images of outsiders. It was, after all, a Leeds newspaper, Samuel Smiles's *Leeds Times*, which issued in 1843 that Leeds lacked "the enthusiasm of Manchester, the enterprise of Glasgow, the volatile gaiety of Liverpool, the intense feeling of Birmingham and the power of London", and in more recent years, as Fraser notes in a brief reference to Leeds United, the only one in the book, Leeds citizens were said to have responded less warmly to their football team's successes and in fewer numbers than followers at Manchester United or Liverpool to their

Leeds already had one historic asset, however, in 1837: "Unlike many other cities which grew fast in the nineteenth century, it had a long pedigree. It did not need legendary extension; Barclay Fox was not visiting a new place. In 1838 the author of a *Historical Guide to Leeds* pointed out that a footpath between Charles Street and High Street was the site of a Roman camp and asked portentously "What would Leeds be with ten Town Halls and no Kirkstall Abbey?" Only last year Maurice Beresford began his fascinating *Walks Round Red Brick* (Leeds University Press, 1980) with a reference to exposed fossils near the University Steps and went on to show very appreciably how important it is to understand the nineteenth-century urban development of Leeds. The institutions of local government, moreover, were not a product of Victorian incorporation, as they were in Birmingham, Manchester or Bradford. A borough charter had been granted in 1207, albeit the charter of 1626 provided the framework for local administration as Leeds grew. The fact that the Corporation owned no property and collected no rates is of considerable importance, not least when Leeds is compared, say, with Liverpool. Yet the pedigree was there.

Rees—and that the *Leeds Weekly Citizen*, which had a remarkable line of editors including Fenner Brockway, is mentioned only briefly in a bibliographical note. There were certainly some clashes of ideology at the University, the twentieth-century history of which (and its relations with the city) is not properly told. This is a local history of Leeds with much of the relevant national politics and national social history left out.

The main cluster of chapters from the third to the fifteenth, is called "The Age of Great Cities" and certainly Leeds figured prominently in all nineteenth-century assessments of what the main characteristics of that new age really were. One of its prophetic figures, the Rev. R. W. Hamilton, a Congregationalist minister, is only very briefly mentioned, but he would bear quotation. The fascinating issues turn as always on the relationship between numbers and quality. C. J. Morgan's chapter on demographic change—the right place to begin—is useful and well documented: like some of the other writers, Morgan points to the main contrasts within Leeds. By 1871 Kirkstall, within range of the Abbey, is "a large and teeming village" and Headingley the classic middle-class suburb (about 60 per cent of its growth between 1851 and 1891 was due to immigration). Both historians and geographers have emphasized social segregation in Victorian cities, and Professor Beresford touches on segregation along with many other subjects (including the preservation of open space) in his complementary chapter on "The face of Leeds".

The chapter by E. J. Connell and M. Ward on industrial development between 1780 and 1914 picks out most of the main themes, although some topics, like Leeds pottery (of considerable interest outside Leeds) have to be dealt with in a paragraph. In its last pages, attention is rightly drawn to some of the problems that disquieted Rimmer twenty-five years ago. For all its earlier versatility and adaptability in 1914, Leeds was still a centre of rough-trade rather than of steel, of machinery rather than of electrical engineering. What happened after 1914? Why was Leeds, to use Fraser's phrase, already quoted, "relatively prosperous"? With which other cities is it being compared—Bradford or Sheffield or Birmingham or Manchester?

This subject is covered very sketchily indeed in the last two chapters of this volume, although there are some provocative reflections on the role of professionals in local government in a chapter by Gwen Hartley. "Party politics in Leeds was not a class of ideologies", Hartley maintains. "It was not even a debate about the distribution of civic goods and services to persons or areas. Party politics provided a framework for individuals to practise their skills and fulfil their ambitions." This challenging thesis, which has no comparative dimension, requires even more local backing than it is given in this chapter. It is curious, too, that there is no mention in it of elsewhere of Gaskell, Alice Bacon, Denis Healey or Merlyn

reference to Broderick's Corn Exchange. There is no reference, either then or later, to the Palace of Varieties, one of the best known Leeds institutions—or for that matter to Leeds as a centre of broadcasting, its rise and fall.

Perhaps such activities are not thought to belong to "middle-class culture". But why then is there not an accompanying chapter on "working-class culture" or "sub-cultures" and how they changed at different points in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? Richard Hoggart is mentioned briefly and for the right reason in a chapter on "The working class" by T. Woodhouse. This chapter is almost entirely political, and in any case makes too much of the "labour aristocracy", the Leeds limits of which are never clearly defined. Woodhouse tries to fit Leeds facts into other people's frameworks rather than to devise a framework of his own. Once again, also, there is a gap between what is said in this chapter and what is said about the Leeds Labour Party at a later date. The problems of having two authors dealing with the same developing subject are never completely overcome. Thus, Professor Taylor's brief account of the economic and social development of the Jewish community in late-nineteenth century Leeds is not followed up with any reference to the influence of Leeds Jews on twentieth-century culture or to the economic and social impact of post-1950 waves of very different migration.

The account of Church and chapel history, too, is brought to a close rather oddly at the end of Victoria's reign. What happened to religion in the new conditions of the mid and late twentieth century? Nigel Yates asks very few questions in his chapter on religion, yet they leap to the surface in a city where Methodism was strong and where there was one outstanding vicar, Dr Hook. It is arguable that even in the nineteenth century,

"Middle-class culture" is dealt with rather summarily and very selectively by R. J. Morris, though it gets off to a good start with music. Again, late developments, like the Grand Theatre, slip between the chapters. We learn from a terse reference in Chapter Seventeen that to the 1960s and 1970s the Grand Theatre was "saved" (we are not told how), and in Chapter Fifteen that it was built in 1877-8, but Morris leaves it out. Likewise, it is odd to have notes on this chapter on the architect Cuthbert Broderick and on iron-frame architecture without a

Leeds religion never carried with it the same dynamic influences on middle-class or for that matter working-class culture as it did in other places, including Bradford.

If the questions multiply, it is at least possible to frame them following the publication of this volume, and if it proved less significant than it seemed at first sight that Fraser's university is Bradford, not Leeds, it is similarly, perhaps, of little significance that the publisher of this volume is the Manchester University Press. The Press across the Pennines is certainly to be congratulated, however, on bringing out a volume which justifies the *Leeds Times*'s trust in "Manchester enthusiasm". Where Redford led the way, Fraser follows. He has already made many valuable contributions to urban history, and while in his own chapter on politics and society in the nineteenth century he builds on solid foundations which he has laid himself, in his introduction and postscript he ranges widely without ever suggesting that the volume he has edited claims in any sense to be exhaustive.

Many of the authors of individual chapters have written theses on aspects of Leeds history and doubtless we will be offered more writing on Leeds in the future from most of them. What is missing in the volume, except when Fraser tries to provide it, is a unifying vision. W. L. (later Sir Linton) Andrews, former editor of the *Yorkshire Post*, who knew a lot about the city, once described it as in many ways "a collection of villages". This volume, perhaps appropriately, is a collection of chapters. Hartley, who has a good eye for quotations, follows up with another. He notes Brian Thompson's remark in his perceptive *Portrait of Leeds* (1971) that "it may well be that the idea of an organic community the size of Leeds is an impossibility". It may well be that a one-man history of Leeds is as impossible, but I hope that one day, with this volume on his desk, some historian will try to write one.

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April Books

Non-Fiction

NATURE LOVER'S LIBRARY Reader's Digest

Three beautifully illustrated field guides—BIRDS OF BRITAIN (£6.95), TREES AND SHRUBS OF BRITAIN (£6.50) and WILD FLOWERS OF BRITAIN (£7.50)—packed with recognition profiles, look-alike charts and special features in full colour. An invaluable collection for the student, dedicated naturalist, rambler or interested layman.

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Fiction

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Hodder & Stoughton

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The geography teacher's smug monotone is spiced with gunshots—a Moscovite mull 109 Noo-dives into the North Sea, his pilot still dangling beneath his parachute.

Other days were calmer, I'd doodle Sea-monsters, a Moscan band with bandallers, Or stare through the window at passing clauda Like condanre auravelling...

I doubt the teacher himself, replaying The same set syllabus year by year, ever haped: For more, boring us with statistics, He made us look between the lines

Into woodland or upon fields where lovers Hide, a tramp falls asleep in the warmth Of a ditch, the surviving generations Lay out their baskets for a Sunday picnic.

Alan those anonymous places we dreamed Our future in, named now and trapped in the wall With our precise addresses, as real And theseophile as my random Onitroid inkblats.

Charles Boyle

Mister Television

By E. S. Turner

LESLIE MITCHELL:
Leslie Mitchell Reporting
An Autobiography
228pp. Hutchinson. £7.95.
0 09 143920 5

Those who live by television like to get their autobiographies out before middle age sets in. They will tell us that Leslie Mitchell, the first "television personality" of them all, has waited until his seventy-sixth year before telling the story of his restless, accident-prone life.

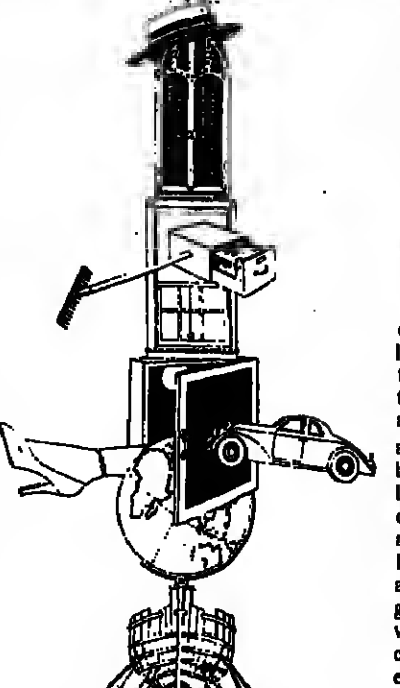
His career spans the history of British television. As an actor he accompanied Marie Tempest to Selfridge's to demonstrate the possibilities of James Logle Baird's invention. Soon afterwards, in 1936, a callous *Daily Mail* headline - TELEVISION ADONIS FOUND - announced his recruitment to the embryonic BBC television service. Also signed on were a brace of Venuses, Jasmine Bligh and Elizabeth Cowell. This sketchy service collapsed unnoticed in September 1939. When it was revived in 1946 Mr Mitchell was there with the words "As I was saying when we were so rudely interrupted" (wasn't that also how "Cassandra" resumed his column, after Army service?). In 1954, when Independent Television went "on the air," it was Mitchell who announced "This is London" ("rather as if he was operating a Freedom Radio from an occupied city," said a critic).

The author's father, an Edinburgh caterer, disappeared early from his life, but turned up many years later in South Africa. Although the boy clashed with two stepfathers, he did not have a deprived upbringing. One good friend was W. J. Locke, the wealthy author of *The Beloved Vagabond*; another was Nigel Playfair, who helped him on to the stage. At twenty-three he was dragged 100 yards by a car and shockingly injured. Back in the theatre, he had to refuse the part of Stanhope in *Journal of a Soldier*, which went to Laurence Olivier, but he later played the role in London and abroad.

As a £5-a-week radio announcer he exchanged the usual expertise with the BBC bureaucracy. His job, he found, did not entitle him to a can of water. The official dislike for discussing "personalities," I think, from a long-cultured belief that all educated people had some private income and somewhere to live. (This belief survived in some publishing houses,

not to mention Printing House Square). Resigning, he became the buoyant, upbeat voice of British Movie-toe News, continuing in this chore even after he was called to the BBC to open the television service in 1936. On that historic day nerves were fraying. When a higher-up gave him a sheaf of closely-typed announcements he tore it in half and said he would rely on memory and improvisation. Thus he set the pattern for a new breed of young men who live dangerously before the camera, thinking on their feet.

The account of early days at Alexandra Palace makes amusing reading. At first outdoor programmes had to be confined to the Palace grounds, but the amenities luckily included a lake, a railway station, a boxing arena, a skating rink, a dance-floor and access to grass and tarring. So, with ingenuity, it was possible to give sports lessons and gardening demonstrations, to show off prize locomotives and



This straw hat perched on a gothic arch above globe, car fengle leg, flying cabinet represents in a collage by "F.R." not the summation of achievements of a particular English public school but the comic genius of Buster Keaton. Like the pictures on page 404 this illustration is taken from *Surrealism and Its Popular Accomplishments*, edited by Franklin Rosemont (City Lights Books. \$4.95).

rearing cars, to stage the Zeebrugge raid and show anti-aircraft detachments in training. This is a racy, anecdotal book, by no means free of cliché (a wartime corpse outside Broadcasting House was "not a pretty sight"). One cannot reasonably complain of name-dropping when Mitchell was for ever in the company of the famous. As a war-time companion-master of the "Brains Trust" he noted that Joad changed his views according to his audience. "I remember how angry he became at one RAF station when I introduced him as the Monarch of the Gen." At least the "Brains Trust" did not tour the camps in the manner of Bob Hope, whose cavalcade of gag-writers and secretaries was headed by four motor-cyclists. Mitchell's most horrible story is the Jewish woman in a New York store who gushed to her hostess: "My dear, we're so excited, we just got our names in the papers. Two couples of ours were sent to the gas ovens. Isn't that something?"

Came the day when the BBC programme chiefs began to say, "Yes, there's Mitchell. Isn't there somebody else?" He matched jobs where he could. For the Conservative Party he interviewed Eden in a new-style political broadcast. The photograph of the Adonis of television facing the Adonis of television across a desk would have made a better jacket illustration than the rather irrelevant picture of troops on the Normandy beaches.

For a brief spell Mitchell was publicity chief for Sir Alexander Korda and learnt in turn what it was like to have his work torn up unceremoniously in front of him. But it was the role of "Mr Television" that appealed and he milked it for all it was worth, even as a life-opener. His jaw, once triply broken, needed to be reset and he had to live with a steel brace and a self-disinfecting arm. Besides guts, he had nudacity. When working for Associated Rediffusion he asked Lord Reith to appear in his "Victor of the Day" programme. Back came a letter in Slavian vernacular asking "Do you really think I would come in like anyone off the street?" and ending "Perhaps at 5,000 guineas I might." It was a pretty reply from one who had earlier likened Independent Television to a maggot sunk in the body politic.

Mr Mitchell forbears to comment on the way television has developed in late years; as one who was thought "too lah-di-lah" for the north he may well have views on the rage for regional accents. But his book does abruptly in 1966, with his second happy marriage.

The West goes South

By Robert Hewison

CHRISTOPHER FRAYLING:
Spaghetti Westerns
Cowboys and Europeans from Karl May to Sergio Leone.
304pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£15.95. Paperback, £8.95.
0 7100 0503 2

The Professor of Cultural History at the Royal College of Art has taken his chair in both hands: he must convince the many that the European western is an appropriate subject for serious study; he must defend himself against small but determined groups of film historians who will dispute every deviation from their respective critical approaches. For the many, the photographs of Clint Eastwood, Lee Van Cleef and Eli Wallach (The Good, the Bad and the Ugly) will not long sustain the illusion that this is a popular book on a popular subject. This is a serious book that makes no concessions. Frayling does not even feel the need to say why he has chosen to study European westerns, beyond a reference to there being a gap in the critical canon.

Westerns, however, are a popular form of entertainment and exist for a mass market, and Frayling is faced with the perennial problem of the cultural historian when writing about "formula" art forms. He can assume the reader's familiarity with only one or two representatives of the genre, and his choice of examples will involve an element of critical evaluation which the formula discusses in terms of its "best" rather than "worst" products. Though the latter might tell us more about the formula - in this case its cruelty and violence. As a result, the study of a popular genre becomes confused with the critical discriminations associated with high art, even with the idea that this is high art.

Beyond this methodological problem there is the difficulty that of the Italian/Spanish ("spaghetti") westerns upon which Frayling concentrates, fewer than twenty per cent have been seen outside Italy, and Frayling has the honesty to admit that of the three hundred spaghetti westerns produced in the key period 1963-69 he has himself seen only fifty-five. Accordingly, he discusses in detail but a few films (and one of his "classics", *Django*, is banned from this country), and

few directors. Among these his emphasis is heavily on the perfection of the formula - later its internal critic - Sergio Leone.

Frayling may make no concession to the popular reader, but he seems open-placatory in the circling band of critical critics. Granted, it is important to define one's critical position and to acknowledge that of others, but Frayling spends a much time on rival theories that we are not confronted by an actual argument western until page 50. Moving between the structuralists, the Marxists, the sociologists and the literary critics, Frayling takes a cautious line of his own. He behaves like Clint Eastwood in *A Fist of Dollars* (1964, Leone's first of the formula); he leans first to one side, then another, accepting ideas from each group in turn, but ultimately deserting them all. The difficulty is that Clint Eastwood arriving from nowhere and leaving for nowhere) he leaves us uncertain as to his fundamental critical commitment.

Of his enthusiasm for the work of Sergio Leone, however, there is no doubt. He sees him as the exponent of a "strange form of critical cinema" which is a commentary both on the "authentic" Hollywood western, and on its own Italian society. "Authentic" - as the word Hollywood implies - does not mean historically true, only true to the western form, and Frayling causes some confusion by insisting on the local accuracy of Leone's *mise en scène*, and the untruthfulness of his interpretation of history. Whether westerns are or are not like the historical West is a mythical place in itself is an irrelevant question when we are dealing with expensive formula entertainment. What is important is the appeal of that entertainment to consumers, and the means by which a creator like Leone can accommodate the formula and use it to his own ends.

Frayling appears to conclude that for all Leone's use of research and subtle detail, the reception of his films in western Italy is what counted. And not only in terms of box office. This is Leone's "Critical cinema".

The emphasis, in the "Dollars" trilogy, on amoral families; families, class and canon; Latin concepts of chivalry (more conspicuous than moral law); *compensatio* (the role of the church in village society); *whips* (not covered by the new *Employers' Liability Act*); perhaps inaugurates the worthy and dull tradition of whole-some public information via the screen, most earnestly sustained in this collection by the heroic sanitary efforts of the Bermondsey Borough Council Health Progress Department between the wars (though the sobriety of the Bermondsey style was memorably relieved at least once with *The Only Way*; on a *Tale of Two Titles*, "propaganda advocating the use of grade A tuberculocidal milk, consisting of numerous drawings interspersed with Sydney Cane's last words").

So the reels unwind. The First World War stimulated the use of film, as of every medium of communication, to carry the government's message, and brought with it the Ministry of Information and its official productions. Perhaps war service increased film's social acceptability: figures such as Ford and George V, who appear in Stoll's *The Victory Leaders* (1919), "the first attempt at cinema interviewing", had rarely been so close to the camera in his early days. Interviewing was to become easier a decade later with the arrival of sound, and sound and vision were quickly combined to create what was rather oddly called the "documentary", mostly a tendentious form of easement for the middle-class social conscience, and afflicted with artistic ineptness and galling didacticism. From *Django* onwards, behind the work of Grierson, Elton, Cavalcanti, Jennings, of the GPO Film Unit, the Empire Marketing Board, Siffert, Reizler, and Eldar, Dyalpympe, beside the more frankly and less pretentiously propagandist works reflecting the politics of the 1930s: from the Unipoint Films Association (why did the Conservative make use of sound film very early on and Labor and Liberals not?) to the urgency of *Free Theatrical* (Relief Committee for the Victims of German Fascism) and the Progressive Film Institute's "Spain Today" series.

The institutional, documentary and propagandist strands are intertwined during the Second World War in the work of the Ministry of Information, bomb-

From innocence to instruction

By Paul Smith

The British Film Institute National Film Archive Catalogue
Volume 1: Non-Fiction Films
808pp. British Film Institute. £50 plus £2 postage and packing.
0 85170 101 9

"Two clowns in Pierrot costume toss a hat to each other." The description of the earliest British film preserved in the National Film Archive exemplifies the character of film at the outset of its career in the mid-1890s, as essentially a showman's toy. The (almost) sort of thing as merely the latest novelty in idle diversion was to cling so persistently to film that it came almost as a surprise to see, from the NFA's fascinating new catalogue of its non-fiction holdings, how rapidly the medium developed in form and function.

If entertainment was always its primary purpose, other uses followed quickly. At first, of course, the stunning phenomenon of recorded motion was itself enough. Shoot anything that moved was the motto, with a natural leaning to the intrinsically dramatic - fire-brigade turn-outs or trains hurtling towards the camera. The cinema's age of innocence was, however, soon over, as the journalists, the educators, the propagandists and the advertisers moved in. News-reels outside the scope of this volume, but topical reporting and cartooning make an early appearance. The first British political propaganda film preserved is G. A. Smith's *John Bull's Hearty*, of 1903, a plea for fair trade countered in 1905 by Hepworth's "political pantomime" demonstrating the advantages of Free Trade.

The scientific and instructional possibilities of film were fast recognized. X-ray cinematography was demonstrated at the Royal Society in 1897. By 1903, the Urban Company was using cine-micrography on cheese miles and water flies in its "Unseen World" series, and, by 1911, three-lapse photography, along with Gaumont in France. Indeed, Urbos seems to have been in the van in the development of the medium, in *Spiritualism a Fraud?* (c. 1906), a "dramatised documentary" purporting to expose fraudulent mediums, "has the ring of modern 'investigative' journalism, while *Accidents Will Happen* (1907), a sketch on whips not covered by the new *Employers' Liability Act*, perhaps inaugurates the worthy and dull tradition of whole-some public information via the screen, most earnestly sustained in this collection by the heroic sanitary efforts of the Bermondsey Borough Council Health Progress Department between the wars (though the sobriety of the Bermondsey style was memorably relieved at least once with *The Only Way*; on a *Tale of Two Titles*, "propaganda advocating the use of grade A tuberculocidal milk, consisting of numerous drawings interspersed with Sydney Cane's last words").

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ing the cine-going public with nutritious advice ("Cookery Hints" series, number 1, "methods of preparing porridge, with particular reference to the construction and use of a hobbox"), low-key heroics (*Newspaper Train* - "How a consignment of newspapers reaches Rangoon by train, despite enemy air raids. Arthur Christensen examines an enemy bullet stopped by a bundle of the *Daily Express*"), and efforts to persuade one of the most caste-ridden societies in the world that the war did at least make for chumminess (Part 23 - "men and women who would otherwise have remained strangers are brought together by their wartime A.R.P. duties"). The 1940s are the climax of the movement to mobilize society for common purposes through the cinema. By the 1950s, television is taking over: the public message is privately rather than communally received, and with it the variety entertainment and the discussion of current affairs that the old cinema had left largely to the halls, the newspapers, and the radio.

It would be hard to think of a facet of twentieth-century life unrepresented in the 10,000 items of this catalogue, though some of course, by virtue of photographic appeal, incidence of contemporary or later interest, accident of survival or of acquisition, figure more strongly than others. There is a lot on advertising ("the sun overleaps one morning and Nature has to be woken up by a Phillips lamp"), aircraft, ballet, jazz, party politics, railways, sport, surgery, war and work (notably mining - perhaps the black and white effects were especially attractive to the art and dignity school). There are endless vistas of topography, and personalities unnumbered. Not everything represents professional contrivance for public consumption: there are amateur films too, as the cine-camera becomes cheap and readily portable, a flickering glimpse of the banalities of private experience, even if the faces are not always quite unfamiliar, as in the 8,000 feet of Eva Braun's home movies. For the first time, the human past is mechanically recorded for us in motion.

That does not mean a new epoch in historiography, or so much of the more naive of the cinema's pioneers supposed. The camera does not give us objective truth, unaffected by the partiality of the human observer. If it records only what it "sees", what it sees depends on choices made by its human manipulators, and what it records rarely arrives on the screen without extensive confection by an editor. None the less, historians are now very ready - as the launch of a new *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* witnesses - to acknowledge the value of film and television records, not as peripheral illustration to accounts of the past derived from traditional documents, but as sources in their own right, which may in some contexts be of first-class significance. For the history of the news, communication in this century, film is a fundamental object of study. More generally, it can illuminate not merely the way things looked but the way people thought or were invited or induced to think they were. The hope to find in this one clinking clatter demonstration of what really happened will always be present, and not always vainly. Yet the footings of Londonderry's "Bloody Sunday" compiled for the Widgery Tribunal will interest us in future not simply, or even mainly, as evidence of the event, but as one of the pieces of evidence which determined that body's view of the event. Not just a picture of external appearances, film stands as a record of the purposes and prejudices of its makers and the influences which operated on its audience, a clue to assumptions and obsessions sometimes below the conscious level. Intriguing as what it propagates by design, in its forward, Lord Brough's recollections of these years, but happily he recognizes also what will always remain, behind the refinements of analysis and the subtleties of interpretation, the primal fascination of film for the student as for anyone else, the brief materialization of irrecoverable life.

The catalogue inaugurates a new series which will cover all the NFA's holdings, with volumes on fiction and news film to come (both categories, one needs to remember, more important in terms of audience than more important in terms of public life). Rightly, though it means very scanty descriptions, the decision has been taken to enter every film, even if it has not yet been fully examined by the Archive's overworked cataloguers. The films are, however, by country of production, and within countries alphabetically by year. There are

some 300 pages of title and subject indexes, though no index of directors, production companies, or sponsors. The work has been well done, and slips appear to be few (there is no entry number 875, some French accents are astray, and rare literals turn up like "Warhillmont" for "Warlimont"). Occasionally the indexing seems a trifle inconsistent: anyone looking for shots of Robert Helpmann and the Martha Graham company will not find from the subject index that they appear in reel 14 of the Wakehurst ballet collection, while Ferner Brockway's appearance in *Nehru-Man of Two Worlds*, catalogued on the same page, is indexed under his name. In general, however, this is an admirable working guide to the Archive's collection.



A shot from *Squadron 992* (1939), a film about the work of a Royal Air Force balloon squadron produced by Alberto Cavalcanti and directed by Harry Watt.

It could have been a little more. To use a collection to best effect one needs to know something about its genesis and the principles and methods of acquisition on which it rests. The National Film Archive is not like the Public Record Office or the British Library, and it is a pity that the opportunity has not been taken to explain fully the circumstances which account for some of the deficiencies and peculiarities of its holdings.

Started in 1935 by Ernest Lindgren, to whom this volume is very properly dedicated, the NFA arrived at its present state of some 10,000 items in a very short time. (In a sense, the NFA was founded. In a sense, it was not. It has been struggling to keep pace with the stream of new material ever since, especially since the advent of television. British films account for about seventy-eight per cent of its non-fiction collection; the only other countries with substantial representation are the USA with 891 items and France with 373, including a number of early Lumière films. Yet as a

the last two figures at least reflect a habitual time-lag in acquisition, but they are not explained.

All this has to do with questions of finance, selection and acquisition which are ignored in the introduction by the Archive's Curator, David Francis. The NFA does not benefit from statutory deposit. It is not the only film archive in the country, and does not necessarily seek to obtain material falling into the province of, for example, the Scottish Film Archive, the various regional archives and the Imperial War Museum, which began to preserve film nearly twenty years before the NFA was founded. (In a sense, the NFA was founded. In a sense, it was not. It has been struggling to keep pace with the stream of new material ever since, especially since the advent of television. British films account for about seventy-eight per cent of its non-fiction collection; the only other countries with substantial representation are the USA with 891 items and France with 373, including a number of early Lumière films. Yet as a

Seeing it straight

By Derek Malcolm

CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS (Editor):
Realism and the Cinema
282pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul, with the British Film Institute. £10.
0 7100 0477 X

Our eyes, as Dziga Vertov once said, see very little and very badly. For Vertov, the great Russian film-maker, the answer was the cine-camera. It was able, like the telescope and microscope, to improve upon our view of the world. But it could penetrate even deeper, and more scientifically than other. It could, in the right hands, illuminate what was real by interpretation and by argument, so that we could "take proper account" in the future. Naturally, the bourgeoisie had other ideas. For it, reality with the camera was a mere chimera, a plaything to distract the masses and to

divert their attention from seeing straight. With such highly charged emotions was the early battle about realism in the cinema fought.

The battle was and still is, of course, the fight for the soul of both film-maker and film-watcher. And it is this wider context that sustains the reader through this dense, sometimes obtuse but ultimately rewarding film study. Mr Williams, Senior Lecturer in Film at the Polytechnic of Central London, links the chapters on realist positions, forms and ideologies, and aesthetics and technology with a critical commentary that is both knowledgeable and vibrantly open. He tries not to regard Realism and Anti-realism as "strictly opposed polarities, glaring at each other across unbridgeable aesthetic and political divides".

His thesis is that there is art in the strictest realism, and that even the most rabid anti-realist is only trying to get nearer the truth in a less compromised way. That much is perhaps obvious. What is less so is how the relationship of films to each other,

outside specialists work in conjunction with its permanent staff, scanning the *British National Film Catalogue* and viewing as much as possible; but only a small proportion of what is chosen as worthy of preservation can in fact be acquired, because of shortage of money. What is acquired depends heavily on the accident of donation. The last thing that can be expected to emerge is a comprehensive, representative collection, based on precisely defined and consistently applied principles, hard though everyone concerned tries.

What the Curator does explain - and it is worth noting this, in case crowd pressure in Dean Street should lead to disorder - is that in any case you cannot see all the films. Preservation is inevitably the first concern of an archive, and fragile and combustible nitrate film or unique preservation copies may not be available for viewing. Mr Francis writes of new facilities for the transfer of films to video cassettes which can be viewed on a television monitor, enabling "master negatives to viewed in a positive form". Leaving aside the questions of quality of reproduction by this method and of whether a television monitor can fulfil the function of a viewing table for the researcher, what proportion of the collection can now be seen? A decade ago, when the Archive first produced a list of its duplicate viewing copies, it was about seventeen per cent of the films or twenty-four per cent of the footage. In recent years, a large programme of copying the steadily decomposing nitrate material which in 1969 formed over four-fifths of the collection has reduced one of the main grounds of unavailability - it is likely that the percentage of film viewable has risen appreciably, but it would be interesting to know.

The Archive badly needs money to increase the rate of acquisition and cataloguing and above all to facilitate the use of its resources. While its position as a division of the British Film Institute has had its advantages, its proper long-term development demands a different status, analogous to that of other great national record repositories. It could and should develop its own research arm - apart from Colin Ford's *Masks and Faces*, tracing the development of acting styles. It is hard to find here a single instance of the exploitation of its riches by its own staff. It cannot achieve real comprehensiveness without a system of statutory deposit, supported by Paul Channon among others when a private member's bill was promoted in 1969. Some effort to inform catalogue users of its problems and needs might have increased their understanding of its shortcomings and enlisted their support for its future. None the less, this volume will be of immense value. Alongside such side to the plunder of other repositories as the British Universities Film Council's *Researcher's Guide to British Film and Television Collections*, it should do much to foster the study and enjoyment of film as an art form, a source of evidence, and a memento of the life that has been. If you missed that train at La Ciotat in 1895 or the Baupoc Coronut Dance in 1950, you can still just catch them.

The professional as pundit

By J.S. Bratton

MARTIN ESSLIN:
Mediations
Essays on Brecht, Beckett, and the Media
248pp. Eyre Methuen. £8.95.
0 413 47040 7

The subject of this volume is the relationship between the various cultures of the Western world, which, to echo Carlyle, "is a rather ominous matter at present", especially to those intent upon finding common ground between them. Martin Esslin has written vigorously and cogently on this subject many times in the last twenty years, and brought it to our attention with great urgency. Born a middle-class European, professionally a mid-Atlantic mediaman, he has every right to see himself as "a sort of mediator" between cultural spheres. Unfortunately, *Mediations* brings together his essays in a way which perpetuates divisions rather than bridges them, and which seems based upon the very attitudes which have created our cultural predicament. The essays are divided into unrelated sections on Brecht, on Beckett and on "the media", the linking element, Esslin's professional involvement with all three, is sometimes a further source of division, used to exclude or to bolster those who have ventured into the field with different professional aims and equipment.

The initials his privileged position gives are often interesting and illuminat-

ing, but they are limited by that proprietary and self-congratulating air which accompanies the possession of technical expertise. In his attack, for example, on the generators of "an enormous volume of useless, time-wasting and intellectually destructive scholasticism both in Germany and in the English-speaking world" devoted to Brecht, the chief reason he finds for their "pseudo-aesthetic emptiness" is that the majority do not read German. It seems to be implied that his own multi-lingual lucubrations are automatically superior. His review of Brecht's poetry in English perhaps gives us a sample of the approach to criticism adopted by the "compromising" reader of German: "Brecht's plays not only contain a great deal of poetry of the most varied kind, but are, in fact, all poetry", and their author "looked at every element in his multi-faceted existence with quizzical, ironic, infinitely understanding eyes - eyes which mostly stayed wide open and dry but from which, very occasionally, he nimbly wiped a tear". It must be agreed that no professional scholar of any worth would attempt to pronounce upon Brecht's theory without reading German; but Esslin's own remarks here are both literal and unhelpful.

Footnotes' evidence supposed academic disinterest of oral deliverance, or zealously correcting poor translations, and the inclusion of a hazy review of a biography of personal acquaintance with the dramatist, all add to the general impression of self-satisfaction. One cannot escape the personal nature of the accounts Esslin gives, and the simplification of all issues into

the terms of his own concerns. Some of these simplifications are mere statements of the obvious: "the impact of *El Jio* essentially depends on the fact that television is an intimate medium...". Others are less superficial. A plain narrative outline of the importance of Reinhardt is given authority by Esslin's personal observation of it, and a certain pliancy, perhaps, by the information that he was employed to cue a distantly-stationed actor during a production of *Everyman* at the Salzburg Festival. The account of the relationship between Beckett and BBC radio is undoubtedly authenticated by Esslin's major role in those negotiations.

But it is when he writes from his most professional point of view, as an insider in television production, that one is most aware of the limitations of the expert theorist. In discussing television, Esslin is both the mediaman who understands the mysteries of the trade, and the pundit who claims to bring weighty intellectual scrutiny to bear upon it. The "media" essays overlap each other very considerably, a common difficulty in collections of material produced at different times, but one which in this case underlines the simplification of the issues involved, and the failure either to find by which to approach them, or to link them to the other areas of his concern. Esslin is aware that television is having a fundamental effect upon the end, especially on our aesthetic responses, but he affects, but he offers no real, could-

bulion towards the "serious study" which he rightly says "dramatise mass entertainment and mass manipulation" therefore deserve.

His suggestions in one essay that the TV serial is a folk epic, and in another that the commercial may be analysed according to Aristotle, do not offer any useful purchase on the problem. Repeating his claim for the importance of his initiative in getting Beckett's novels read on Radio Three merely underlines the separation he makes between that valuable enterprise and what belongs to "the media". There is indeed no simple ladder of taste and appreciation leading from a liking for *Crossroads* to an admiration of *Shades*; acknowledgement of this here is confined to an apparently automatic assumption of the inferiority of "the masses", who do best to obtain actual stills from some of the films. Esslin's suggested answer to the problem that he perceives in this way is the professional, technician's answer, in terms of his own expertise: more public service television, which will lead to "higher forms of drama... material that is more intelligent and more accomplished", which will "ultimately produce a feedback into the world of the commercial" and result in "a bridge between the world of crude folk art and that of consciously cultivated high art". The final pronouncement, of the volume, that "a theory of drama that neglects (TV commercial) seems to be elitist, pretentious, and out of touch with the reality of its subject matter" could not be better exemplified than by the assumptions Esslin himself displays in his analysis of the cultural situation in these essays.

Spaghetti Westerns, as this excerpt may suggest, is a mixture of the strong, the weak and the poorly constructed. Frayling has made a thorough study of all the European manifestations of the genre; and he is good on the actual circumstances of film production in Italy, though he does not tell us enough about the pressures of finance. His weakness is his uncertain ground that he has chosen, for the most part, to follow the work of the Three merely underlines the separation he makes between that valuable enterprise and what belongs to "the media". There is indeed no simple ladder of taste and appreciation leading from a liking for *Crossroads* to an admiration of *Shades*; acknowledgement of this here is confined to an apparently automatic assumption of the inferiority of "the masses", who do best to obtain actual stills from some of the films. Esslin's suggested answer to the problem that he perceives in this way is the professional, technician's answer, in terms of his own expertise: more public service television, which will lead to "higher forms of drama... material that is more intelligent and more accomplished", which will "ultimately produce a feedback into the world of the commercial" and result in "a bridge between the world of crude folk art and that of consciously cultivated high art". The final pronouncement, of the volume, that "a theory of drama that neglects (TV commercial) seems to be elitist, pretentious, and out of touch with the reality of its subject matter" could not be better exemplified than by the assumptions Esslin himself displays in his analysis of the cultural situation in these essays.

The final questions must be whether or not Frayling's work will increase our appreciation of Spaghetti Westerns and convince us that they are a subject for serious study. The answer to both is undoubtedly yes, but the medium itself is the message.

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John Co. 136

From a seat in the stadium

By Walter Laqueur

CHRISTOPHER BOOKER:

The Games War
A Moscow Journal
236pp. Faber. £5.95.
0 571 11755 4

Christopher Booker went last year to the Olympic Games (and to Moscow) for the first time in his life; he did so with an ideal briefing from his editor — to regard himself as an artist, recording whatever caught his eye. The first impressions of an acute observer are always of interest; the result in this case is a highly readable politico-literary travelogue with some occasional glances to the direction of the Lenin stadium. It is not, however, entirely obvious why Mr Booker should have found this an "overwhelming experience", "almost impossible to describe".

Seen in retrospect, the Games had much less propaganda effect than the Soviet leaders hoped or their critics feared. It is unlikely, for instance, that the sale of Soviet books in English will shoot up as a result of that the number of tourists to Russia from the West will be greater in 1981 than it was in 1979. It is doubtful, in fact, whether anyone changed his views about the Soviet Union one way or another as a result of

attending the Games, which by now, in any case, are already more than half forgotten. The same was true in 1936. The Berlin Games of that year had no lasting effect on public opinion outside Germany: true, for a few months the Nazi regime became slightly more respectable, but by the end of the year the mass parades had been forgotten, and only a few highlights were remembered, such as Jesse Owens's victories. If we are still interested in the Games of 1936 it is not because they changed history, but because — as with the Moscow Games — they revealed so much naivety on the part of well-meaning people and a disturbing lack of sense and sensitivity on the part of some who should have known better.

What impressed Booker was not so much the ability of the Soviet authorities to stage-manage mass demonstrations and to perfect crowd control — few ever doubted their capacities in this direction — but the stubborn refusal of Western sports bureaucrats and others to admit that the Games were a political demonstration, and that they were willing accessories to the Soviet Union's propaganda exercises. But why single out poor Lord Killalea or Sir Denis Follows or the others? There is no denying that they expressed the wishes of the majority, probably the great majority, of sportsmen and women who wanted to participate in the Games. It goes without saying that this had nothing to do with Marxism or Soviet propaganda; there is every reason to believe that if the issue had been Berlin in 1936 all over again, attitudes would have been much the same.

It could have been pointed out that South Africa had been excluded from the Olympic movement; to why not the Soviet Union? But this is hardly a convincing argument, for if South Africa was a superpower, so had the unconditional support of a dozen or more satellites. It would not have had to worry about a boycott; there is clearly no equal law for all.

There was, then, the widespread belief, reinforced by powerful vested interests, that the Games had to go on irrespective of all other considerations. At work here were the attitudes of a consumer society for which entertainment has become an supreme value, and it is perhaps not surprising that Booker returned from Moscow sounding a bit like Solzhenitsyn on the West's lack of moral fibre. Life in the Soviet Union (Booker concluded) is certainly a more serious business than it is over here: "The peoples of the East have not been affected so much that has trivialized and debilitated life in the West". That backwardness has its advantages has been known to economists for a long time, but it should also be noted that the trends and inclina-

tions he observes in the West also exist in Soviet society; indeed the return to certain bourgeois values and habits there has been even more pronounced.

This I believe is not quite clear to Booker and as a result he comes to some mistaken conclusions about Soviet society. One example should suffice. He juxtaposes the close relationships which he sees prevailing in English families with the loosening of family ties and a general dehumanization in the Soviet Union. He refers to the vital protection and emotional support given to Steve Overt by his mother, notes that Sebastian Coe and his father were almost inseparable, that "Auntie Doreen" who adopted Daley Thompson played a crucial part in his athletic career, that Oaty Gakes (who won an unexpected bronze medal in the 400 metres hurdles) owes almost everything to the efforts of his father, a Camden Town coalman, and so forth. All this is no doubt true and admirable, but the perspective becomes a little distorted when the author sets this picture of domestic warmth against the inhuman coldness of a society in which children are taught to admire Pavel Morozov, the boy who was killed by peasants in 1932 because he reported his father for hoarding grain which should have gone to the State. He quotes the chilling story, told by another reporter of the Soviet scene, of a Swedish diplomat who asked his young son temporarily attending a Soviet school, which grown-ups did he most respect? The boy replied "Lenin" and then went through the Soviet hierarchy from Brezhnev to the district Communist party secretary, not once naming his parents.

These things are disturbing but to what extent do they reflect Soviet realities? Pavel Morozov has not been a hero of Soviet youth for a long time and the idea of the party secretary of, say, the Bauman or Krasnaya Presnya region in Moscow being a hero even to six-year-old children would cause much amusement to most Soviet citizens. Even if such legends were taught, they would be more or less automatically rejected or perhaps just ignored. Soviet citizens early on in their lives develop a sense of cynicism; they learn that there are various levels of truth, and that official truth has to be repeated ritually but not necessarily accepted and believed. Such pervasive cynicism may be a matter of concern, but its existence hardly warrants the assumption that family life is somewhat less close in the Soviet Union than in this country.

People in communist societies are generally speaking far less interested in politics than is commonly supposed in the West, and all close observers agree that the retreat to the private sphere in these countries has become even more widespread during the

last two decades. The silent majority will remain silent, because a free hand has been given to the professionals who have chosen politics as a career and who are, to put it politely, not always the most positive elements in communist society.

This inevitably leads to the central question about the direction in which the Soviet Union is now moving. Booker, echoing Churchill, states that "no nation on earth has presented such an enigma as Russia". But is this really true? Russia should be no more of a mystery than any other country for anyone willing to make a modest effort to learn the basic facts about it, even though a certain amount of imagination is needed, on the part of people who have had the good luck to grow up in democratic societies, to understand the working of societies in which there is little or no freedom. A good case can in fact be made in favour of the proposition that America is a far less predictable country than the Soviet Union. Booker quotes Sir Bernard Pares, writing in 1940, that "you can always see at once whether anyone talking about Russia has really lived there; it is a kind of freemasonry entirely independent of both class and view". Pares contributed more than anyone else to the academic study of Russia in Britain and yet despite a lifetime of experience he was disastrously wrong in his judgments about the character of the revolution in 1917, and about Lenin and Stalin; in the end he even believed that the Moscow trials of the 1930s were just and fair.

The example seems to contradict the point I have just been trying to make: if even the great expert had been so wrong, how can ordinary mortals be expected to get their facts and opinions about this mysterious country right? But the contradiction is more apparent than real. Pares's experience was limited to pre-revolutionary Russia; he never really understood Bolshevism, the revolution and what happened after. In his case, as with some of his contemporaries, intimate knowledge of Tsarist Russia was a hindrance, not an advantage.

But there has been no similar watershed in recent decades; the Soviet system has been in existence for a long time, it has changed remarkably little, it is thoroughly conservative and the reasons that can be adduced to explain Pares's failure to understand cannot possibly explain the errors of today. Nor can one fairly put most of the blame on Soviet misinformation. There was (and is) a massive effort in this direction, but it has on the whole been remarkably unsuccessful. The real problem is not deception, but self-deception; or, more accurately perhaps, intellectual laziness. Hence the widespread inclination towards

"mirror imaging", the assumption that the Soviet Union and its satellites are, *grasso modo*, societies like our own, that life in these societies does not substantially differ from life in the West and that, but for the reprehensible meddling of the politicians, and especially the cold warriors among them, the existing barriers to ever better mutual understanding and coexistence would soon come down. The reason for this lack of comprehension are deeply rooted and there is unfortunately no good reason to assume that there will be a substantial change in this respect in the foreseeable future.

There is little, too little, about sport in this "Moscow Journal", which is a pity because Soviet sport offers certain insights into the way the regime works. Various interpretations, some of them more than a little outlandish, have been added to explain Soviet and East German successes. Yet the real reasons are simple and obvious. There is, to begin with, greater enthusiasm in the communist countries for active sports.

For a number of reasons sport is given by the state far higher priority than in the West, the resources allocated are much greater, and the approach is relentlessly competitive — this is also true with regard to the systematic use of drugs. There is no room at the top level for amateurism in Soviet and East German sport, except perhaps in those contexts in which national ability counts for almost everything and training for comparatively little — eg. the short sprint distances. Eastern bloc women and men are not innately faster, stronger and more skilled than their counterparts from other parts of the world; they are only better prepared. Whenever they compete on equal terms, that is as professionals, for instance in soccer, the advantages of the Soviet and East German political and social system are not really obvious. With the exception of ice-hockey, which is played only in a handful of countries, Soviet and East European competitors have not done very well in recent decades; the disciplines in which one would expect them to excel; the reasons remain to be explored. Again, it would be unfair to blame the Russians for their highly professional approach; it is not their fault if Western sports bureaucrats continue to maintain that all is well in the world of sports and that Western and Eastern Southern and Northern competitors meet on equal terms in the Olympic Games and world championships and other such occasions. Where the capacity to generate haulage is concerned, there seems to be no business like sports business.

Thus by the late 1960s, Cuba was travelling heavily in new sugar equipment, while today the predominance of sugar in the Cuban economy is greater than it has ever been — reckoned either as a percentage of exports or as a contribution to the GDP. In purely economic terms, the consequence of the Revolution has been to strengthen the hold of this monocrop and to reverse the trends towards diversification which had begun, modestly and tardily, by 1958. At the same time, sugar production itself has remained only at about the same aggregate level as it was in the 1950s, while Cuba's share of a still expanding world market for sugar has steadily shrunk. A lion's share is provided by the fact that the Soviet Union, Cuba's new trading partner *par excellence*, is today the world's largest sugar producer as a result of the major growth in production which took place there while Cuba was ailing.

Professor MacEwan attributes the astonishing economic stagnation in Cuba since 1960 not entirely to the United States blockade of the island but to bad habits formed in the era of colonialism and underdevelopment. If this were indeed so, it would seriously discredit the idea of "revolutionary" "vanguardism". Having enjoyed twenty years of total power a revolutionary "vanguard" in the shape of the Cuban Communist party (now reformed to give Castro and his co-conspirators a more secure hold on the reins of power) surely ought to have been able to do a little more than this? Particularly if the vanguard concerned is trying to point the way to the truth to the suffering peoples of Nicaragua, El Salvador, Angola, Ethiopia and all Aias, it was not to be.

The real explanation of what has gone wrong has little to do with the United States; with "underdevelopment" or with "colonialism". In the early 1960s, as part of its general loose-limbed quarrel with the United States (which deriving from a particular and excessively nationalistic version of "revolutionary" "vanguardism" took over not only the commanding heights of the economy but most of its small businesses as well), the confusion was made, given that, understandably no

It is impossible to write a biography of Makarios without covering a wide and complex range of political history. The story involves not only Greece, Turkey and Britain, but the United States, the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the Soviet Union, and many other countries as well. Perhaps the Irish, who formed part of the UN force in Cyprus from 1964, were the best qualified to understand what was going on. The political complexities could well make tedious reading, but it is to Mr Mayes's credit that they come out clearly and sharply defined.

CUBA

Twenty years of Castro

By Hugh Thomas

ARTHUR MACEWAN:
Revolution and Economic Development in Cuba
265pp. Macmillan. £21.
0 333 28306 6

Arthur MacEwan's study of Cuba, written from a Marxist perspective (as his publisher describes it on the dust-cover), is full of statistics, but there are three almost obvious ones which he omits, and indeed he makes almost no mention of the facts which lie behind them: first, that Cuba since the Revolution has had an annual growth rate per capita of minus 1.2 per cent (World Development Report, 1981, for 1960-78); second, that the Cuban armed forces of some 200,000 men or more, are larger than those of any other state in Latin America except for Brazil — indeed per head of population Cuba probably has more men under arms than any other country in the world. Third, whereas in 1959 Cuba, despite disparities of distribution, was one of the two or three richest Latin American states, she is now one of the two or three poorest: at a national income of \$810 per head per year (again I take the figure from the World Development Report), she is less well off than most of her neighbours — Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, even Colombia and Mexico.

The reality behind these figures is not easily understood. The main point to emphasize is that in economic terms the word "Revolution" in MacEwan's title is a misnomer. In 1958 Cuba was certainly a country which depended much more than was good for it on sugar. As the World Bank had pointed out, in a famous report of 1950, diversification was necessary if Cuba's "much treasured liberties" were to survive. Some diversification had been achieved by the end of the 1950s but the political revolution achieved by Castro put an end to it. All those, for example, who had been trying to build up trade in the sale of winter vegetables to the East coast of the United States were ruled by Castro's determination to have a row with that country. The crudeness, ignorance, over-simplification and intolerance of the Revolutionary Government alienated a whole class of managers who ought otherwise to have assisted economic diversification.

Thus by the late 1960s, Cuba was travelling heavily in new sugar equipment, while today the predominance of sugar in the Cuban economy is greater than it has ever been — reckoned either as a percentage of exports or as a contribution to the GDP. In purely economic terms, the consequence of the Revolution has been to strengthen the hold of this monocrop and to reverse the trends towards diversification which had begun, modestly and tardily, by 1958. At the same time, sugar production itself has remained only at about the same aggregate level as it was in the 1950s, while Cuba's share of a still expanding world market for sugar has steadily shrunk. A lion's share is provided by the fact that the Soviet Union, Cuba's new trading partner *par excellence*, is today the world's largest sugar producer as a result of the major growth in production which took place there while Cuba was ailing.

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doubt in the appalling circumstances, politically reliable ignoramuses were often appointed to control large enterprises, and given that Ernesto Guevara, as the symbolically great revolutionary minister of industries, was intent on such neo-romantic projects as making Cuba independent in steel — perhaps his finest legacy was the toothpaste factory which allegedly produced a substance that turned to stone on exposure to the air.

At the same time, a large militia and army were needed to defeat the new regime's opponents, who were being helped by a trigger-happy and highly incompetent Central Intelligence Agency. In 1966 the Cuban government, acting partly under the influence of the Chinese cultural revolution, also did away with small businesses, including street-vendors and tiny shops whose presence afforded the poor Cubans some slight relief but the statistics of whose activities were not easy to gather and whose operators seemed to the secret police certain to be anti-revolutionary — as indeed they were inclined to be. This made things worse. Frantically, Castro called on all hands to man the pumps, or rather the machete: the sugar harvest of 1970 would be the biggest ever — 10 million tons! The target was not reached.

After this the Russians seem largely to have taken over the management of the Cuban economy. All the evidence is that they had become involved in Cuba rather reluctantly at first, in 1959-60; Khrushchev is supposed to have hoped originally that Castro would become a Nasser, not a Kadar. But the Cubans had to tell to someone a quantity of sugar comparable to that which they had previously sold to the United States. The Russians were the only possible buyers despite their own high production of sugar. This imperative, combined with Castro's need of, and fascination with, weapons, cemented an alliance as improbable as any in the ill-fated history of communism. The Soviet Union began to give aid to Cuba in 1960, and was influencing the course of events in Havana as early as 1961. Cuban debts began to grow, and the impetuous Khrushchev strove to gain some military benefit from this economic committalment. By placing intermediate-range ballistic missiles and nuclear bombers in the island, he sought to increase his first-strike capacity against the United States. But he was outmanoeuvred by Kennedy in a part of the world where, whatever the inadequacies of the CIA, the United States still had local control. His ensuing defeat led, it is now generally thought, to the Soviet decision to go ahead with the vast armaments programme that has since been under way in Russia.

Russia's economic and military aid to Cuba meanwhile continued, in the late 1960s, it would seem that Cuba began to operate as a kind of Comintern or intelligence agency for the Soviet Union — not so much in Latin America (because of opposition from local communists) as to Africa. After the failure of the sugar harvest of 1970, the Soviet connection was emphasized further by the restructuring of the Cuban economy so as to reflect more exactly the Soviet system; while, it is said, the Cuban political police was also effectively purged by the Russians. Since Castro supported the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, there has been no public complaint about any act of Soviet foreign policy by any Cuban leader. Old members of the Communist Party of pre-1959 days — including Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, the vicar of Bray of modern Cuba (he had been a member of Batista's cabinet in the 1940s) — became indeed so, more prominent in the decision-making in Havana, and the role of the military, always important, became still more marked.

A new stage began in the mid-1970s, when the Cuban regime began actively to intervene in Angola and elsewhere in Africa in division strength — rather than merely providing support for existing governments and guerrilla movements. With the discovery of off-shore oil in Mexico, and with indications of American self-doubt, the left wing guerrillas in Nicaragua and elsewhere in Central America now began to receive more systematic help. In 1979 Nicaragua became in effect Cuba's first Latin American satellite. At the same time, and less successfully, Castro started to interest himself in Caribbean, with consequences speaking. The Cuban government now familiar in Jamaica and Grenada. All these activities were a clever exploitation of "ideological" political warfare; the degree of Soviet control over them might

vary but since, in the last resort, the Soviet Union is Cuba's paymaster and must be presumed interested in them, Russian involvement cannot really be doubted. Despite Soviet approval, however, it cannot be quite excluded that Castro is seeking to establish for himself in the Caribbean region a chain of interesting "revolutionary" satellites which, while they might hope for Soviet aid and serve the Soviet cause for the foreseeable future, would in the long run constitute a new power-centre in the communist world — powered by aid from Guatemala or perhaps Venezuela. Castro has never been content only with his own island and the dismal failure of his management of the economy there gives him an added incentive to seek "glory" or influence abroad.

During these years political repression has continued unabated, though in our perverse way in this country we fall to take much account of it. It is quite absurd, for example, that streets should be named after Steve Biko, whereas the name of the Cuban student leader, Pedro Boitel, is unknown. Boitel died after twelve years in jail in 1972, at the hands of a repressive police. His only crime was to have won an election in the Cuban students' unions in 1960 against the official candidate.

Public outrage at political and economic conditions in Cuba was astonishingly manifested last year when 10,000 Cubans took refuge in an embassy left temporarily unguarded — a propaganda defeat for communism no less striking than the construction of the Berlin wall. But as usual Castro managed to run rings round the American government by opening the gates of the island to whoever wished to leave, and allowing out a total of 120,000 Cubans, some of them criminals, in order to embarrass the Carter administration.

It is a touching feature of MacEwan's book that none of these facts is actually gained; he even hints at them himself. He tells us for example that "it would be naive to suppose that the economic relationship with the USSR has not affected Cubano policy", and that "Cuba's lack of economic independence can hardly be seen as a positive aspect of its development strategy... the Soviet relation surely has its costs". MacEwan's resolute refusal to use statistics which even estimate the economic changes which have occurred in Cuba since 1975 make his book seem rather out of date. At times the reader may feel that MacEwan's Marxism, for all his publisher's commendation, is a fancy dress which begins to

fall to pieces as the ball proceeds: for example, his quotation from Castro himself that in agriculture "the private sector's role will be indispensable for some time to come". But no one will gain any real knowledge of the genuine mismanagement, tedium, tragedy and frustration in modern Cuba from this book, nor any sense of why its leaders foster what Janec Stanie, a Yugoslav journalist, has recently described as "the Cubans' burning desire for a messianic role in the world" (In *Communism's Crossroads*).

Professor MacEwan is honest enough to admit the "lack of sufficient data" for his purpose in almost every field. His conclusion is: "... It is probably true that in any revolutionary process there is a time when the laws of action of the old society have been destroyed and the new modes of operation and organisation have not been firmly established, and during that time the explicit decisions of revolutionary actors are particularly important". In other words, if you have destroyed everything from the past and built nothing for the future, you can hang on to personal power indefinitely and even take your countryman to fight in far-off countries of which they know nothing — particularly if you can get the Soviet Union to pay the bill.

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The elusive Ethnarch

By C. M. Woodhouse

STANLEY MAYES:
Makarios
A Biography
303pp. Macmillan. £15.
0 333 28127 6

If the first post-war British government had shown foresight and courage, Archbishop Makarios would probably never have been forced to leave Cyprus, and Stanley Mayes's admirable biography would never have been written. In the late summer of 1945 a report was put to the Attlee government by Philip (now Lord) Noel-Baker, the Minister of State at the Foreign Office, with the backing of Sir Reginald Leeper, the Ambassador in Athens, that Cyprus should be ceded to Greece. In other words, *enosis* would have been achieved. The Foreign Office had no serious objections, but the Chiefs of Staff and the Colonial Office did.

At that date the Turks had neither the moral standing nor the legal right to object. Nor, probably, had they even the inclination, given suitable guarantees for their minority of the population; for between the wars Attleick had positively encouraged Turkish Cypriots to emigrate to the mainland. The objection of the Chiefs of Staff and the Colonial Office, though strong, were short-sighted.

The Chiefs of Staff could have had the bases they thought they needed not only in Cyprus but elsewhere in Greece as well,

and Cyprus would automatically have been incorporated in NATO a few years later. The Colonial Office would have been rid of a problem which it had itself created. But it was still believed that whatever *enosis* raised its ugly head, all that was necessary was to deport a few bishops. Ernest Bevin, who had only been in the Foreign Office a matter of weeks, was not prepared to take the risk against the advice of the Chiefs of Staff, and probably also Churchill and Eden. *Hinc illic lacrimae*.

Hina, alas, the need for Mr Mayes's scholarly and readable account of the man who first made *enosis* an international cause, and then abandoned it. It is still difficult to be sure whether Makarios's motives for abandoning the cause which had become identified with his name were egoism (to become a Head of State) or fear (of provoking war) or cunning (in the belief that *enosis* could eventually be achieved after all by a policy of *regular pro-mexu sauer*). Such uncertainties add to the cryptic quality of his character which Mayes has so perceptively captured and analysed.

Probably Makarios's biggest mistake was to turn *enosis* into an international issue by appealing, through the Greek government, to the United Nations. This automatically gave the Turkish government a *locus standi* which it did not have under the Treaty of Lausanne. It also ensured that the US government was obliged to take an open stance instead of exercising private pressure on the British government; and the open stance was bound to end in defeat for the British.

It was perhaps inevitable that Makarios should make this mistake, because, shrewd as he was, he had little knowledge of the great world outside his island. His experience overseas, except in Athens, was very slight. When he studied in the USA, his English was limited and his acquaintances were mostly other Greeks or American churchmen. Admittedly he had more worldly wisdom than his uncomfortable ally, Colonel Grivas, the leader of the armed rebellion in Cyprus, but that is not saying much. He was much less well equipped than Karanmalla, who became Prime Minister of Greece soon after the rebellion began.

Yet Makarios wanted to control the policy not only of the Cypriot Greeks but also of the mainland government. Every time he visited Athens as Archbishop (which included the title of Ethnarch or "leader of the nation") as well, a communist on his talks with a communist authorities announced complete agreement on policy. But more often than not, Makarios then went home and did something quite different, with which he deceived the Greek government to conform. Both Karanmalla and his successor, George Papadopoulos, wrote exasperated letters to Makarios saying, almost in the same words: "We agree on one thing, you do another".

There was probably no hope of achieving *enosis* for an independent Cyprus after the Greeks, with Makarios in the van, rejected the constitutional proposal of Lord Radcliffe at the end of 1956. But Makarios, Grivas and even Karanmalla all

hoped for it after the Zürich and London agreements expressly ruled it out in 1959. Their views of trying to achieve it were different. Makarios believed in cunning, Grivas in force, Karanmalla in diplomacy. The first two not only frustrated each other but finally handicapped the third. Even diplomacy had no chance once the scene was invaded by the monstrous figures of the Greek Colonels in 1967.

In this sad story Makarios cuts a single and not unattractive figure. He was too big for Cyprus but too small for the larger world. Mayes presents him, wars and all, with sympathy and impartiality. He shows the most attractive side of Makarios's character in defeat: first in exile in the Seychelles, and then in the last days of his life, when "his courtesy and consideration for others remained to the end". But these fine qualities of personal charm will not help the reader to the fact that Mayes also rightly calls him hypocritical and dishonest. He compares Makarios with the saviour of Canon Cusauba.

It is impossible to write a biography of Makarios without covering a wide and complex range of political history. The story involves not only Greece, Turkey and Britain, but the United States, the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the Soviet Union, and many other countries as well. Perhaps the Irish, who formed part of the UN force in Cyprus from 1964, were the best qualified to understand what was going on. The political complexities could well make tedious reading, but it is to Mr Mayes's credit that they come out clearly and sharply defined.

John Coile

Inquisitorial incinerations

By Henry Kamen

GUSTAV HENNINGSEN

The Witcher's Advocate

Basque Witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition (1609-1614).

607pp. University of Nevada Press. \$24. 0 87417 0567

In 1610 a number of witches were burnt at an *auto de fe* of the Spanish Inquisition in the northern city of Logroño. The victims were Basques, mostly from the Navarrese village of Zugarramurdi. The story has been told several times, notably by Henry Charles Lea in his magisterial survey of the Inquisition, and by the distinguished folklorist Julio Caro Baroja. The deaths brought about a rapid rethinking by one of the inquisitors responsible, Alonso de Salazar Frías, who subsequently wrote a detailed report that persuaded the Inquisition to cease any

further execution of witches. As a result, Spain became the first European country to eliminate its "witch craze" by quite simply ignoring it. For Lea this made Salazar Frías into a unique proponent of reason over superstition.

Gustav Henningsen, a Danish folklorist who has spent many years exploring witchcraft in Spain, has discovered the papers of Inquisitor Salazar and has used them as the basis for his doctoral thesis, a fat book of which one-third constitutes footnotes and appendices. It is a learned labour of love, and Henningsen has clearly come to be fascinated by Salazar, whom he describes as "far ahead of his time", and whose "revolutionary documents ought to have been published three and a half centuries ago to the benefit of the whole western world."

Henningsen gives the most detailed account yet available of the Zugarramurdi cases, their context, their outcome and the subsequent efforts of the inquisitors, notably Salazar, to find a solution to the problem of mass witchcraft. He shows in detail how the so-called craze was pre-

dictated by the activities, just across the border in France, of the notorious witch-hunter Pierre de Lencore; and demonstrates, in passing, that the 600 deaths commonly attributed to de Lencore were probably less than about eighty. After the executions of 1610, Salazar Frías was entrusted with further enquiries into what he later called "the most regrettable affair in the history of the Inquisition." He collected, however, such evidence as he could find, and a volume of self-contradictory and absurd confessions that he was pushed by the evidence itself into rejecting the reality of witchcraft. Several children reported having seen to the place of the Sabbath, but Salazar's two secretaries were positioned there on the night and saw nothing; several girls confessed to intercourse with the devil, but on examination were found to be virgins. After receiving 1,802 confessions from alleged witches over a period of seven months in 1611, Salazar reported that 1,384 of these were children aged under fourteen, and only 100 were aged over twenty, many of these being sixty to ninety years old.

Henningsen gives a full, scholarly survey of the affair. The picture may indeed be too full: it seems unnecessary to devote over forty pages to giving the name of every single "witch" in the documents. It is when we move beyond Henningsen's valuable factual account that the difficulties begin to arise. Despite the enormous amount that has recently been written on European witchcraft, important differences of approach remain. Henningsen's position is fairly traditional: he is not a social anthropologist and does not accept that witchcraft in the Basque country was a normal social function. He accepts the concept of a "witch-craze" and devotes considerable space to attacking the surely long discredited views of Margaret Murray on a witch cult in western Europe. Three main explanations are offered for the Basque cases of 1609-14. Following the argument proposed by Kieckhefer and others, he suggests firstly that the outbreak came when a learned tradition about witches, represented in this case by de Lencore, amalgamated popular traditions of superstition. Secondly, he suggests that dream and a dream hysteria transmitted within the local communities were "the main reason for the outbreak". Thirdly, commenting on the astonishing willingness of people to confess that they were witches, Henningsen says: "I suspect

that during a witch trial the accused person often suffered a complete reversal of identity", in the sense that under pressure witnesses would say the opposite of what they knew to be true; and as evidence he appeals to Communist purge trials. It can be seen from this that despite some vagueness in the direction of the anthropologists, he puts in the end for a primarily psychiatric explanation for the "witch craze". When approaching the problem from the other side, in terms of the motives of those who prosecuted the witches, he says unambiguously that "the persecution of witches was often instigated by people who gained economic or social advantage from them."

Many students of witchcraft will, like myself, find ground for disagreement with these conclusions. I am more worried about the restricted evidence on which the conclusions are based. For example, to support his contention that the eruption of a learned tradition, in the form of de Lencore and sermons from pulpits, caused the outbreak of 1609-14, Henningsen states explicitly that the Sabbath (or *aguelarre* as it was called among the Basques) was hitherto unknown in the area. This is certainly untrue. There are explicit references by Spanish writers in 1501 and 1541, and no doubt at other times, to goat-worship among the Basques. It would be more helpful to explore the context of these claims than to dismiss the *aguelarre* as a scholarly invention.

The question of restricted evidence must also be raised when considering the sources used. Henningsen relies almost exclusively on the documents of the Inquisition. This is because the 1609-14 cases were handled by the Inquisition. One wonders how different the information would be if he were to study the several Basque witchcraft cases that came before the secular courts. Moreover, since the papers used here are those of an institution wholly external to the Navarrese villages, the author cannot actually penetrate the internal mentality of the communities he is studying. In fact the whole socio-economic dimension of life in the affected region is strangely absent from this book.

Finally, since Henningsen's study starts abruptly in 1609, it should be emphasised that he presents a very incomplete account of the attitude of the Inquisition. He is incorrect to say (p. 124) that the

fact of Grace in 1610 "had gone further than usual" by promising "exemption from confinement of property and other penalties". In fact, all Edicts of Grace promised exemption to those who voluntarily confessed. It is his treatment of Salazar Frías, who is praised for his "revolutionary documents", that should alarm all who read with great caution. Henningsen deals exclusively with the 1609-14 period, and says almost nothing of the attitude of the Inquisition between 1481 (when it was founded) and 1609, limiting the previous 130 years of inquisitorial history. It is easy to pass Salazar as a great progressive. The work is a bit more complex. Throughout the 130 years there was a marked reluctance on the part of the Inquisition to acknowledge the reality of witchcraft or to get mixed up in a matter which it frequently left to the secular courts. Salazar himself pointed out that never before 1610 and there had been many outbreaks before that date—the Inquisition excepted anybody for witchcraft in the Basque country.

The fact is that from 1526, when a committee set up by the Spanish Inquisition General met in Granada and decided to take a cautious attitude to so-called "witchcraft"—which several of those present, including Antonio de Guevara and the future Inquisitor General Valdes, declared to be a delusion—the Inquisition had shown reluctance to use the death penalty. In 1538 the Inquisitor in Navarra, Valdes, was warned not to take witch confessions at face value. In 1539 an Inquisitor in Barcelona was dismissed for executing witches. None of this is mentioned in Henningsen's book. Salazar's short, was only part of a long tradition. To attribute the sensible role of the Inquisition to his unique influence is both incorrect and an injustice to three generations of sceptics in the higher ranks of the Holy Office.

These important caveats in no way minimize the fine scholarship and immense interest of Henningsen's study. The traditions of superstition and considerable work remains to be done on the nature and context of Spanish witchcraft, and the papers of the Inquisition alone are not an adequate basis for rounded study of this complex phenomenon.

Enormities of an émigrée

By Anita Brookner

VICTOR DE PANGE

Le plus beau de toutes les fêtes
La Correspondance inédite de Madame de Staël et d'Elizabeth Hervey, duchesse de Devonshire.
266pp. Paris: Klincksieck.
2 252 02115 0

"Le plus beau de toutes les fêtes, c'est de passer une heure avec vous", wrote Mme de Staël to the second Duchess of Devonshire. The Duchess was Elizabeth Hervey, the "Lady Betty Foster" painted by Reynolds, who had also portrayed the first Duchess, Georgiana. These two portraits were recently on view in the "Treasures from Chatsworth" exhibition at the Royal Academy, and few will forget the extraordinary and remarkable beauty of these two women whose affection survived their anomalous relationship with the Duke, Georgiana's husband and Elizabeth's lover, Elizabeth replacing Georgiana quite naturally when the latter died. They were as resourceful in their way as Mme de Staël was in hers, but less clumsy and probably less candid. It was not Mme de Staël's good fortune to know the first Duchess, whose extravagant personality would perhaps have been more to her taste, but she maintained an enthusiastic if intermittent and superficial correspondence with the second from her arrival in London in 1813 until her death in 1817.

Mme de Staël arrived at Harwich on June 13, 1813, having left her home with no luggage but a bowl and a fan some two years earlier, and proceeding by way of Austria, Russia, and Sweden where she was lavished in rallying European opinion towards an overthrow of the régime in France. Taking up residence at Bruner's Hotel in Leicester Square, and despatching her twenty-five-year-old lover to Bath for a course in self-improvement, she set about the main purpose of her visit, indeed, of her life, at this stage of it, which was to replace Napoleon as ruler of Europe with a ruler of her own choosing in the immediate future.

The second Duchess of Devonshire was to her far senior but much better preserved, and, it should be said, less subject to the vagaries of history. Astute, fearless, able, and apparently fragile, she was widowed shortly after her marriage, and moved from Devonshire House to Piccadilly Terrace, although her love of travel, which was life-long, kept her on the move. She was instrumental in introducing Mme de Staël into the higher reaches of London society, and obtained for her an invitation to a ball at Carlton House, where she met the Prince Regent. The author of the present volume of previously unpublished letters makes the point that without the patronage of the Duchess, Mme de Staël might have been less well received, although she was of course renowned throughout Europe and an object of some curiosity wherever she went.

She did not, it must be said, make a good impression. She came preceded by an admirable reputation: she was a woman of letters, who had unsuitable lovers, and she was politically active on an international scale. She was, moreover, indifferent to the finer points of English etiquette. On one memorable occasion, recounted by Byron, she had trouble with the footmen behind her chair to lean forward and tug out an offending bust. She could not take a joke—she could not even see a joke—and was thus far from being a secure social position. She still, to her late friends, tended to entertain her friends by flinging back her head and declaiming a couple of dozen alexandrines, or, worse, by joining her daughter Albertine in an impromptu ball dance. By the time she arrived in London she had lost whatever looks she had once possessed and was strikingly pale: "Je n'ai plus de couleur", she wrote to her sister-in-law, "et je suis en moi-même et d'ailleurs comme un cadavre".

But she was as valuable as ever; and apparently unaware that she must never have left her room, she continued to write letters of importance. English gentlemen when they were in the middle of a peroration, without her imposing reputation, only hesitated to interrupt her; but she was not so easily intimidated. Her subsequent behaviour, perhaps for this reason, when

she went to a reception given by Lord Lansdowne, people stood on tables and chairs to watch her progress.

Her intention was to put her protégé, Bernadotte on the throne of France (and thus ensure repayment of the colossal loan made by her father to the French crown), but as time went on she was forced to the discreditable conclusion that the defeat of Napoleon would also mean the defeat of France and the occupation of Paris by Allied troops. When asked her most urgent desire, she replied: to see Napoleon victorious, and killed in battle. With altogether uncharacteristic prudence she came round rather quickly to the acceptance of Louis XVIII as her future ruler, and made her abjuration to him at Hartwell House, before leaving London, with some relief, for her long-delayed return to Paris.

While in London her book *De l'Allemagne*, banned by Napoleon, had been published by John Murray and had sold out within three days. She was as famous and as fitted as she would ever be. Yet she was profoundly altered, by an accumulation of disappointments which time and recognition had failed to alleviate. Something of her condition is conveyed by these letters, or rather notes, to the Duchess. There was, of course, no real friendship between them: simply a mutual recognition of outstanding qualities and an exchange of the politenesses required of persons of her rank. Yet even here Mme de Staël manages to get it wrong. Her letters, which are all concerned with possible or future meetings ("will you be at Lady Bessborough's this evening?") are abrupt and bizarre and leap from one subject to another without transition. And they are excessive. The sort of overwhelming and bullying affection that had been effective with Mme de Staël might not have suited the English lady so well.

"Vous me donnez une mauvaise nouvelle en me refusant ce soir. Tâchez d'en changer d'avis, ce serait si bon!" To which Elizabeth the Duchess replied by addressing her as "chère Corinne". One of the qualities that made Mme de Staël so intolerant a friend was her need to call people to account. As the never minded giving a

full explanation of her own feelings, why should other people not feel the same? And why should she not get her own way by this method? After all, it usually worked. But alas, it only worked for a time. Who would not feel a thrill of alarm on being interrogated in this manner? "Dites-moi si je me suis trompée, mais j'ai cru voir dans votre physionomie d'avant-hier une expression qui m'était défavorable. En quel point-je méritée? Je ne le sais, mais j'ai senti que je ne le méritais pas puisque cela me faisait autant de peine." Good manners demanded that this sort of query should be ignored. But how do you ignore a woman who insists on signing off with the words, "Je me mets à vos jolis petits pieds"?

Her anxious presence was removed by the onset of events in Europe, and on May 12, 1814, she was back in Paris. There Benjamin Constant found her pale, thin, and absent-minded. The parties and the receptions resumed, but Mme de Staël could only two preoccupations: to find a husband and a dowry for her daughter Albertine, and to write the chronicle of the Revolution, her greatest book, left unfinished at her death in 1817. Napoleon's return from Elbe impinged on these considerations although Mme de Staël reacted with less vigour than would have been possible in earlier years. She retired to Coppet and then set out for Italy, where she resumed her correspondence with the Duchess who was spending her remaining years in Rome. Her purpose was to enlist the Duchess's help in obtaining a Papal dispensation which would enable Albertine to marry the due de Broglie. This was no doubt speeded on its way through the agency of the Duchess's friend, Cardinal Consalvi. Yet despite this obligation Mme de Staël never managed to travel from Pisa to Rome to thank her friend, but continued to fire off what missives, in which she sounds curiously odd, and even less sure of her mark than usual. A notable example of this is her tendency to refer to the Duchess's friend, the Countess of Albany, as "ma reine", or "ma souveraine". This familiarity with the widow of the last of the Stuarts was found fairly offensive, even by those who knew Mme de Staël well.



Lady Elizabeth Foster, 2nd Duchess of Devonshire, by Reynolds. (Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement. Photograph: Courtauld Institute of Art.)

Yet in their last years both ladies held court gloriously. The Duchess of Devonshire in Rome, Mme de Staël at Coppet, where she received Byron in 1816. By this time the Duchess appears to have felt a stronger affection for Mme de Staël ("chère et très chère Corinne"). From Paris, on January 29, 1817, Mme de Staël writes to her friend, telling her that Albertine's child is due and that her book is nearly finished, but adding, "... ma santé est bien mauvaise". The following month she succumbed to an attack or a stroke and died in July of the same year. The Duchess of Devonshire survived her for

another seven years. The surprising fact that emerges from Victor de Pange's excellent and careful publication of these letters (which, it must be said, possess little intrinsic interest) is that the story of Mme de Staël's relations with England, a country which she saw as the model for the France of the future, should have received such scant attention. Even the major biographies make little of her third and longest visit to this country. It is even possible that more letters may emerge, and it is to be hoped that Mme de Pange will lend his scholarship and his family piety to a complete edition.

Domestic divergences

By Alan Forrest

RODERICK PHILLIPS

Family Breakdown in Late Eighteenth-Century France

Divorces in Rouen 1792-1803
244pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £18.50.
0 19 822572 5

Roderick Phillips's book is a significant addition to the growing literature on what Maurice Agulhon has termed "sociality", or the basis of day-to-day respect and relationships in the community. In France, Yves Castan has written a magisterial thesis on social relationships in eighteenth-century Languedoc; in England Richard Cobb has devoted much of his energies in recent years to unearthing different kinds of documentary evidence which illuminate the strains and tensions of everyday living, and has in particular demonstrated the value to the social historian of *déclarations de grossesse* and the records of the *juges de paix*. In the records of the new divorce courts created by the French Revolution in 1792, Dr Phillips has now uncovered a rich and previously untapped vein of evidence for domestic strife and neighbourhood sociability.

The book itself can be divided into three fairly distinct sections. In the first the author discusses the institutional framework of divorce: the *tribunaux de divorce* which were established to give judgment in those cases where misconduct was involved, and the *assemblées de famille* which sat when both parties were agreed in their petition for divorce, generally on the grounds of incompatibility. The involvement of the couples' families is most striking under both procedures, especially of the women's family, for it is notable that men were more inclined to call friends and workmates as witnesses. Equally significant is the lack of any formalising of social stigma attached to divorce in a country where it had been totally unknown, where the Church's insistence on the sanctity of marriage had been paramount, and where the *stigmatisation de veuve* granted before 1792 had been so severe. Indeed, The divorce law of that year is heavily imbued with the humanist spirit of the Revolution and must stand as an important part of its social achievement, particularly in that it gave women equal status before the law. It lasted only until 1803—hence the time-scale of the present work—when Napoleon's more pyramidal notions of family authority and greater concern for clerical sensibilities resulted in its repeal.

In the second section Phillips reveals his analytical capabilities as he analyzes the 953 divorces which his chosen municipality provided in these years—a ratio of divorces to marriages of 1:8, which made Rouen the second of France's major cities in its propensity for divorce (after Paris,

which chalked up an impressive figure of one to four, but whose records were put beyond Phillips's grasp by a fire at the Hôtel de Ville in 1871). Inevitably some of the statistics produced are more interesting than others, but it is through them that we learn, for example, the degree to which women predominated among the petitioners, the extent to which it was the women of the manual trades of the city who took advantage of the new freedom offered to them, the relative reluctance of women in the surrounding villages to consider divorce, or the significance of the enforced departure of the husband—through labour migration or military service. The general social history of France may carp that some of the statistics adduced are improbably reconciled, or suggest that at least one of the tables on page 69—appears to have escaped from a contemporary art exhibition at the Tate, though the historian of the family would not agree. This is a book that will interest several different scholarly audiences.

It is perhaps in the third and most substantial section of the book that the author comes into his own, for Phillips writes very well, and to his discussion of what he terms "the social expressions of family breakdown" his style is given free rein.

The evidence produced before the tribunals provides a rare insight into the degree of violence, and particularly of violence towards women, which was accepted or tolerated by eighteenth-century society. Wife-beating, adultery, alcoholism, all are here in an abundance to evoke every form of the crime-drama of our popular dailies. The reasons for the violence are carefully categorized: money problems, sexual jealousy, children, unwanted pregnancies, and much besides—and the nature of marriage in the popular classes of Rouen society is sharply illustrated, though always with the important proviso that it was only the failed marriages which reached the divorce courts.

Just as interesting is the light which these cases throw on those who came into contact with this warring couple: the in-laws who try to intervene, the ubiquitous neighbours, always ready, *sur la palme*, to offer evidence or wipe up the blood, the male neighbour who would often refuse to help if his intervention could be interpreted as interfering with another man's marital rights. In the reactions of these third parties, and in the language they use before the tribunals and assemblies, a part of the local community comes to life, and it is a measure of the author's achievement that he succeeds so well in resurrecting so many poor, barely literate people from oblivion. Clearly, the women in these cases were more stigmatized than men, and Dr Phillips writes of them with sympathy and understanding—a sympathy also extended to a certain extent which found itself, in one drunken family brawl, subordinate to the direction of the mistress.

Medieval manorial

By J. Z. Titow

CHRISTOPHER DYER

Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society
422pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50.
0 521 22618 X

Those already familiar with Christopher Dyer's articles on selected aspects of the late medieval economy of the West of England have been awaiting the publication of his promised comprehensive study of the estates with high expectations; now that the book is with us it must be said that those expectations have been fully justified. Dr Dyer's book is, from all points of view, an excellent study and a very important one. Its main claim to excellence is that the author is constantly asking pertinent questions and proffering convincing answers in most of them, based on sound scholarship and a scrupulous distinction between fact, deduction and conjecture. Its two main claims to importance are the great sweep of time over which the changing fortunes of rural society of one particular region of England are examined, and, above all, the comprehensive and depth of treatment of the various aspects of that society in the closing centuries of the Middle Ages.

Dyer's study is heavily biased in favour of the period c. 1350 to c. 1540; some eighty-four pages in all are devoted to the years before 1350 and some two hundred and thirty to the years after 1540. This imbalance is in no way the fault of the

author but an inescapable consequence of the shortages, and nature, of the available documentation which, until manorial court-rolls and account-rolls became available, simply does not allow an investigation of many problems either at all or in depth. The crucial manorial records are not available for the Worcester estates before the 1370s—much later than on other estates—and as a result the pre-1370 part of the book is largely confined to the early history of the estate's formation and to the broad outlines of later developments, though one or two topics have been treated more fully—particularly, the problem of the tenurial structure of the estate in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Even so, the amount of information which Dyer has managed to coax out of his sources prior to 1370 is impressive. From about 1370 onwards, the scope of the discussion, and the depth of analysis, increases immensely. It is for this reason that Dyer's book must be regarded primarily as a study of conditions in the late thirteenth and fifteenth centuries and, as such, I would consider it the most important contribution to our knowledge of the period since the publication of Rodney Hill's collection of lectures on the fifteenth-century English peasantry.

It is in the nature of medieval manorial records, even at their best, that some aspects of medieval society and the economy are very much better documented than others. For example, the landlords' economy can be studied in a far greater extent, and with much greater accuracy, than the peasants' economy, and, in turn, the peasants themselves are more accurately depicted than the conditions can be reconstructed more closely than any other aspect of their position. Dyer's study

of the landlords' economy is a very full and accurate study, and with much greater accuracy than the peasants' economy, and, in turn, the peasants themselves are more accurately depicted than the conditions can be reconstructed more closely than any other aspect of their position. Dyer's study

suffers from these usual, and inevitable, imbalances but he seems to have done all that could have been done by the material and no important aspect of either the landlords' or the peasants' position escapes his attention. Perhaps a little more could have been done on the problem of late medieval manoriality, which is discussed mainly in terms of the living (i.e. by comparing the numbers of tenants in different estates) rather than of the dead (i.e. by comparing recorded mortuaries and such) though the abundant court-roll evidence for the period should have made the latter possible.

In a study which maintains such a uniformly high standard, what should be regarded as a particularly important contribution becomes partly a matter of personal preference and partly a matter of the greatest needs in the field. In terms of the current state of knowledge of the period, I would single out as particularly welcome a very full discussion of the peasant land-market in the fifteenth century, and the discussion of the problem of deserted villages, and brief, but very pertinent, comments on the "community of the vill"—a subject much given to pseudo-scholarly theorizing.

In conclusion, a word of commendation in the Cambridge University Press following the author to support his exposition with such a generous number of maps, diagrams, tables, and bottom-of-the-page references—something which so many publishers nowadays seem to regard as an expensive luxury.

Associations of an aesthete

By P. R. Fawcett

PI. P. CLIVE

Pierre Louys (1870-1925)

A Biography

264pp. Oxford University Press. £15.
0 19 81575 7

GORDON MILLAN

Pierre Louys

ou le culte de l'amitié

306pp. Aix-en-Provence: Pandora.

Two biographies of Pierre Louys within the space of two years—and a third is on its way—must be reckoned something of a surprise. Louys is one of the forgotten aesthetes of the 1890s, remembered if at all for his friendships with Glide, Valéry and Debussy and for the erotic novel which brought him sudden fame, *Aphrodite*. After the turn of the century, he withdrew from the public gaze and devoted himself to bibliophilic pursuits, dying in obscurity in 1925. "Dix ans, dix ans de silence pendant lesquels, dans la mort", was Fernand Oregre's succinct but accurate summary of his life, quoted by H. P. Clive in his preface.

His is the more conventional account, dividing Louys's period of greatest activity into "Years of Promise: 1890-1895" and "Years of Fame: 1896-1901", and devoting a separate chapter to each. These are preceded by "Prelude: 1870-1889" and a portrait of "The Young Pierre Louys", his friends, and followed by "Twilight: 1902-1919" and a brief "Postscript: 1920-1925". The book is, as is much of the evidence, Professor Clive makes no attempt to plumb the depths of Louys's psyche. But, all in all, his portrait of his

subject is as stylish and restrained as the which adorns the dust-jacket of his volume.

Gordon Millan does not claim to be writing a biography of all Louys's life, he says, is "trop riche en paradoxes pour qu'un seul ouvrage puisse l'embrasser tout entier". Consequently he concentrates his study on a few of the Louysian legends, formed, notably with Glide, Valéry, Mallarmé, Wilde and Debussy. After a few chapters which cover much the same ground as Clive's "Prelude", he follows Louys's life through until about 1900 in chronological sequence and then jumps forward to the period around 1916 when Louys was instrumental in persuading Valéry to complete *La Jeune Parque*. It is a pity that Dr Millan's work, unlike Clive's, lacks the useful adjunct of an index.

Neither Dr Millan nor Professor Clive seems in fact to have been aware that the other was simultaneously chasing the same prey. Millan can be accounted the more successful researcher in that he has managed to track down the originals of many of Louys's letters to his brother Georges, along with numerous other letters, whereas Clive has had to be content with extracts from the sale-catalogues of their correspondence in 1936 and 1937. Millan also digs up a number of letters from Louys to Debussy, published in the *Revue de Musicologie*, which Clive has missed, and the correspondence between Louys and Valéry which he is in the process of editing. But his previsions to scholarship are seriously marred by the frequent misquotations, mistaken page-references, and wrongful attributions which litter his text and law. If any, of which can be ascribed to printer's errors.

Doubtless Louys has been unjustly neglected by posterity and a portrait of him such as that given by Jean Delay in his magisterial *Jeanne d'André Glide* deserves

some correction. But to attack Delay, as Millan does, by deliberately inducing his words, at the same time as borrowing some of his phrasing without acknowledgment, is unworthy. Delay portrays Louys as an extrovert merely in contrast to the more introverted Glide, and, within the context of his work, this is justifiable. Moreover, Delay is surely right, for example, to identify a passage from Louys's diary read to Glide in May 1888 as the one beginning "Beaucoup de poésie, beaucoup de douleur", rather than Millan's "Pourquoi suis-je si ambivalent?" Although Millan does usefully redact a letter from Louys to Glide about *Les Cahiers d'André Walter*, previously thought to have been written in June 1890, at belonging to September 1889, this hardly entitles him to claim to have contested "the plausibility of the authenticity of dates attributed to their letters."

It is a shortcoming of Millan's study that he would frequently have us believe black was white. In accusing Glide of "jalouse puerile", he seems readily able to forget that Louys was a notorious practical joker—a trait which surely needs most careful treatment in a work concerned, according to its title, with the cult of friendship. He is on surer ground in dealing with Valéry and Debussy, with whom Louys's relations were less fraught than with Glide, but it is really true, as Millan claims, that Louys's friendship with Debussy ranks so far as an "amitié mûre", as he sees them, as "désintéressement" and "désintéressement". But to state that, without Louys's help, neither *Pelléas et Mélisande* nor *La Jeune Parque* would ever have been written attacks of the kind of persnickiness which Millan is only too ready to accuse others.

What emerges clearly from both biographies is that Louys had a deeply disturbed childhood which left him with an impulsive and unstable temperament

—hence the practical jokes. Certainly he could hardly have been more generous in the support he gave to his friends and he showed himself at times to be a most perceptive critic. His own production suffered as a result and it was not until 1892 that he published his first slim volume of verse, more than a year after Glide's *Cahiers d'André Walter*, though initially he had appeared the more precocious of the two.

He inherited a large sum of money from his father in 1891 but, fearing that he was himself suffering from a mortal illness, squandered it all by 1894. In 1895 he fell in love with Marie de Heredia and was heartbroken when she preferred his friend and rival, Henri de Régnier, though two years later Louys formed a liaison with her that would last until after his own marriage to her younger sister, Louise. After the success of *Aphrodite* in 1896, he wrote two further novels, the second of which, *Les Aventures de Roi Pausanias*, he ruined his health to finish. Thereafter he became a recluse, deserted by his first wife in 1913, and marrying a second, Aline Steiner, already the mother of his son, in 1923. One curious fact, mentioned by Professor Clive, is that, during the last twenty years of his life, he did whatever he could to prevent any likeness of himself being reproduced.

But, although both biographies do much to dispel many of the myths surrounding Louys's existence, neither of them provides any critical assessment of his writings. Both Clive and Millan regard the posthumously published *Perrigilium Mortis* as Louys's masterpiece, but there is no evaluation of his earlier verse or novels, nor of the exquisite Symbolist *comix* he wrote at the start of his career. For that, without which Louys's place in literary history cannot be assessed, it appears we must wait for the forthcoming study of his life and art by David J. Niedecker—not J. D. Niedecker as his name is given in Dr Millan's bibliography.

J. D. Niedecker

